

Concussion Management

The Board of Education recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported in children and adolescents who participate in sports and physical activity but they may also occur in school under other circumstances. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Neurology and the American Brain Injury Association, a concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury: a disruption in normal brain function due to a blow or jolt to the head. A concussion may cause altered mental status that may or may not involve loss of consciousness, along with other symptoms that may include headache; neck pain; balance problems or dizziness; nausea; vision/hearing problems; difficulty concentrating, and/or recalling information; confusion; drowsiness; and exaggerated emotional responses (e.g., anger, irritability, crying, silliness). Symptoms may be immediate or may develop over minutes and even weeks. If not managed correctly, concussions can lead to serious, long-term and sometimes life-threatening complications. It is with this in mind that the Board has developed a concussion management policy to support the proper evaluation and management of student head injuries and concussions, whether as a result of participation in sports (interscholastic athletics and intramurals) and other school-related activities or attendance in school. The District's Chief Medical Officer has the final authority to determine whether or not a student may return to practice or place, or other activity participation.

Concussion Management Team

The District may establish and maintain a concussion management team to oversee the implementation and delivery of the District's Concussion Management Policy. The team will consist of the Athletic Director, the School Nurse, a Physical Education Teacher, the District's Athletic Trainer and the District's Chief Medical Officer.

Training

All District coaches (including volunteer coaches), physical education teachers, nurses, the athletic trainer and the Director of Athletics will be required to participate in a course of instruction regarding the recognition and management of concussions on at least a biennial basis. The District's Athletic Department will offer, on an annual basis, instruction and training by a qualified health care professional to enable these individuals to understand how such injuries occur and how to prevent them, to recognize the signs and symptoms of concussions, and to respond appropriately if a student has suffered or may have suffered from a concussion. These individuals may also take an approved online course. Every employee, volunteer coach or other specified individual that completes an approved online course must present a certificate of completion to the Director of Athletics, where it will be kept on file.

The District will annually provide information for parents and students regarding concussions, including but not limited to: (1) the definition of the term "concussion"; (2) signs and symptoms of concussions; (3) how these injuries occur; and (4) guidelines for

return to school and athletic, physical education or other activity participation after suffering a concussion. This information will be made available on the District website at: <http://www.newburghschools.org/healthservices.php> and for athletes at: <http://www.newburghschools.org/athletics.php> as well as communicated to parents and students at the start of each sports season, prior to a student's participation in interscholastic and other athletics.

Management

Any student who is believed to have sustained or who has sustained a concussion or other mild traumatic brain injury shall be immediately removed from the athletic, cognitive or other activity and monitored. In an appropriate case, 911 will be called. The student's parents will be contacted as soon as practicable. A student who is symptomatic may require mental and physical rest and may require academic accommodations such as limited computer work, reading activities, assistance to class, etc., until symptoms subside.

The student shall not be permitted to resume athletic activity until he or she has been symptom free for at least 24 hours, has been evaluated by a medical professional and has received written and signed authorization from a licensed physician. This authorization shall be kept on file in the student's permanent health record. The District's Chief Medical Officer has the final authority to determine whether or not a student may return to practice or place, or other activity participation.

Reporting

All incidences of concussion or suspected concussion shall be immediately reported by the coach, advisor or other supervising staff member, in writing, to the District Health Office and Athletic Director, as appropriate, within 24 hours. The Athletic Director or School Nurse, as appropriate, shall report incidents of concussion or suspected concussion, in writing, to the Building Principal and Superintendent of Schools within 24 hours of receiving a report.

If a student sustains a concussion at a time other than when in school or engaged in a school sponsored activity, the District expects the parent/guardian to report the condition to the School Nurse and/or the coach so that the District can support the appropriate management of the condition.

The Superintendent, in collaboration with the School Physician and Athletic Director, shall develop regulations to implement this policy.